

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L BERLIN 5918

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, CASC, GE, US

SUBJECT: GDR HUMANITARIAN CASE: LEONARD LEE LOTT

REF: A) BERLIN 6143 ; B) USBERLIN 2240 ; C) STATE 274675

1. LEONARD LEE LOTT CALLED AT THE EMBASSY JUNE 19 TO REPORT A NEW DEVELOPMENT IN HIS CASE, WHICH IS ONE OF THOSE OFFICIALLY SUBMITTED BY THE US TO THE GDR GOVERNMENT DURING NEGOTIATIONS ON THE ESTABLISHMENT OF DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS. HE SAID HE HAD BEEN CALLED INTO THE MAGISTRATE'S OFFICE IN EAST BERLIN THE WEEK BEFORE REGARDING A LETTER FROM US CONGRESSMAN CHARLES BENNETT TO GDR STATE COUNCIL CHAIRMAN WILL STOPH IN SUPPORT OF LOTT'S APPLICATION TO LEAVE THE GDR WITH HIS EAST GERMAN FIANCE AND CHILD. THE MAGISTRATE AUTHORITIES ASKED HIM WHY HE HAD NOT INFORMED THEM EARLIER THAT A CONGRESSIONAL LETTER WAS BEING SENT DIRECTLY TO STOPH AND SAID THEY WERE NOW UNDER ORDERS TO PREPARE A REPORT ON HIS CASE IMMEDIATELY. LOTT NOTED TO EMBASSY OFFICER THAT THESE MID-LEVEL MAGISTRATE OFFICIALS APPEARED IRRITATED THAT THEY HAD BEEN "OUTFLANKED" AND SAID HE WAS CONVINCED THAT THEY WERE UNDER PRESSURE TO FOCUS ON HIS CASE ON THE BASIS OF A DIRECTIVE FROM STOPH'S OFFICE. BEFORE LEAVING THE MAGISTRATE'S OFFICE, LOTT DEMANDED A SPECIFIC DATE FOR AN "ANSWER" ON HIS APPLICATION AND THREATENED TO USE " OTHER MEANS" TO RESOLVE HIS SITUATION IF HIS DEMANDS WERE NOT MET. THE MAGISTRATE OFFICIALS WAIVERED, ACCORDING TO LOTT, AND

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FINALLY PROMISED MORE SPECIFIC INFORMATION ON THE STATUS OF

HIS CASE BY THE END OF JULY.

2. ONCE FINISHED WITH HIS PRESENTATION, LOTT ASKED EMBASSY OFFICER WHY THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE DISCOURAGED LETTERS FROM CONGRESSMEN TO GDR PARTY AND GOVERNMENT LEADERS ON BEHALF OF US CITIZENS, A TECHNIQUE WHICH HE FELT HAD PRODUCED RESULTS IN HIS OWN CASE. WHILE ADMITTING THAT A POSITIVE RESOLUTION OF HIS CASE SEEMED MORE LIKELY IN LIGHT OF THESE NEWEST DEVELOPMENTS, HE EXPRESSED HIS FRUSTRATION AND IMPATIENCE WITH THE MAY DELAYS HE HAD ALREADY FACED AND SAID IF HE DID NOT RECEIVE A POSITIVE ANSWER FROM THE GDR BY JULY 31, HE WOULD SERIOUSLY CONSIDER "GOING PUBLIC". WHEN ASKED TO BE MORE SPECIFIC, LOTT SAID HE HAD ALREADY CONSIDERED UNDERTAKING A PUBLIC DEMONSTRATION WITH THE INTENTION OF BEING ARRESTED BY THE GDR IN EAST BERLIN DURING A VISIT TO BERLIN BY THE SENATE FOREIGN RELATIONS COMMITTEE IN MARCH OF THIS YEAR. HE SAID HE WAS SURE THAT ONCE ARRESTED IN EAST BERLIN, HE WOULD BE SPEEDILY RELEASED THROUGH US INTERVENTION WITH THE SOVIETS SINCE THE US DOES NOT RECOGNIZE EAST BERLIN AS PART OF THE GDR.

3. THE EMBASSY OFFICER AT THIS POINT CITED THE CASE OF A US CITIZEN (STEINER) WHO HAS BEEN IMPRISONED IN THE GDR FOR OVER A YEAR FOR ACTIVITIES IN EAST BERLIN AND TOLD LOTT THAT, DEPENDING ON WHAT HE DID TO GET ARRESTED, HE COULD NOT RELY ON EFFECTIVE US INTERVENTION OR A SPEEDY RELEASE. THE EMBASSY OFFICER FURTHER WARNED THAT SUCH A COURSE WOULD TRANSFORM LOTT'S SITUATION FROM A HUMANITARIAN CASE SEEMINGLY APPROACHING RESOLUTION TO A CUT-AND-DRIED CASE OF AN AMERICAN IMPRISONED IN THE GDR AND WOULD JEOPARDIZE THE STATUS OF THE OTHER UNRESOLVED HUMANITARIAN CASES ON THE US LIST. LOTT SEEMED TAKEN ABACK AT THE THOUGHT OF ACTUALLY GOING TO PRISON IN THE GDR AND QUICKLY ACKNOWLEDGED THAT RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN HIS CASE CALLED FOR A WAIT-AND-SEE ATTITUDE FOR THE TIME BEING. BUT HE REPEATED THAT HIS PATIENCE WAS RUNNING OUT AND SAID THAT WITHOUT A POSITIVE ANSWER FROM THE GDR SOON HE WOULD HAVE TO CONSIDER OTHER COURSES OF ACTION.

4. COMMENT: LOTT HAS LONG MADE VEILED THREATS ABOUT "GOING PUBLIC" TO PUT ADDED PRESSURE ON THE GDR, BUT THIS CONFIDENTIAL

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IS THE FIRST TIME HE HAS REFERRED SPECIFICALLY TO A PUBLIC DEMONSTRATION AIMED AT PROVOKING HIS OWN ARREST. THAT LOTT SHOULD RAISE THIS OPTION JUST WHEN HIS CASE HAS TAKEN AN ENCOURAGING TURN IS REMINISCENT OF THE ERRATIC BEHAVIOUR HE DISPLAYED IN LATE 1974 BEFORE HIS DISCHARGE FROM THE US ARMY. LOTT'S IMPATIENCE COULD AT SOME POINT LEAD HIM TO TAKE ACTION DETRIMENTAL TO THE RESOLUTION OF OTHER HUMANITARIAN CASES ON THE US LIST. HOWEVER, IT IS DOUBTFUL THAT HE WILL

ACTUALLY RISK ARREST BY THE GDR, AND HE LEFT THE FINAL IMPRESSION
THAT HE WILL DO NOTHING TO JEOPARDIZE A RESPONSE FROM THE
GDR ON HIS CASE THIS SUMMER.COOPER

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